

2011 Military Health System Conference

Care for the Caregiver

What Works, What Doesn't

The Quadruple Aim: Working Together, Achieving Success

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Compassion Fatigue (CF)



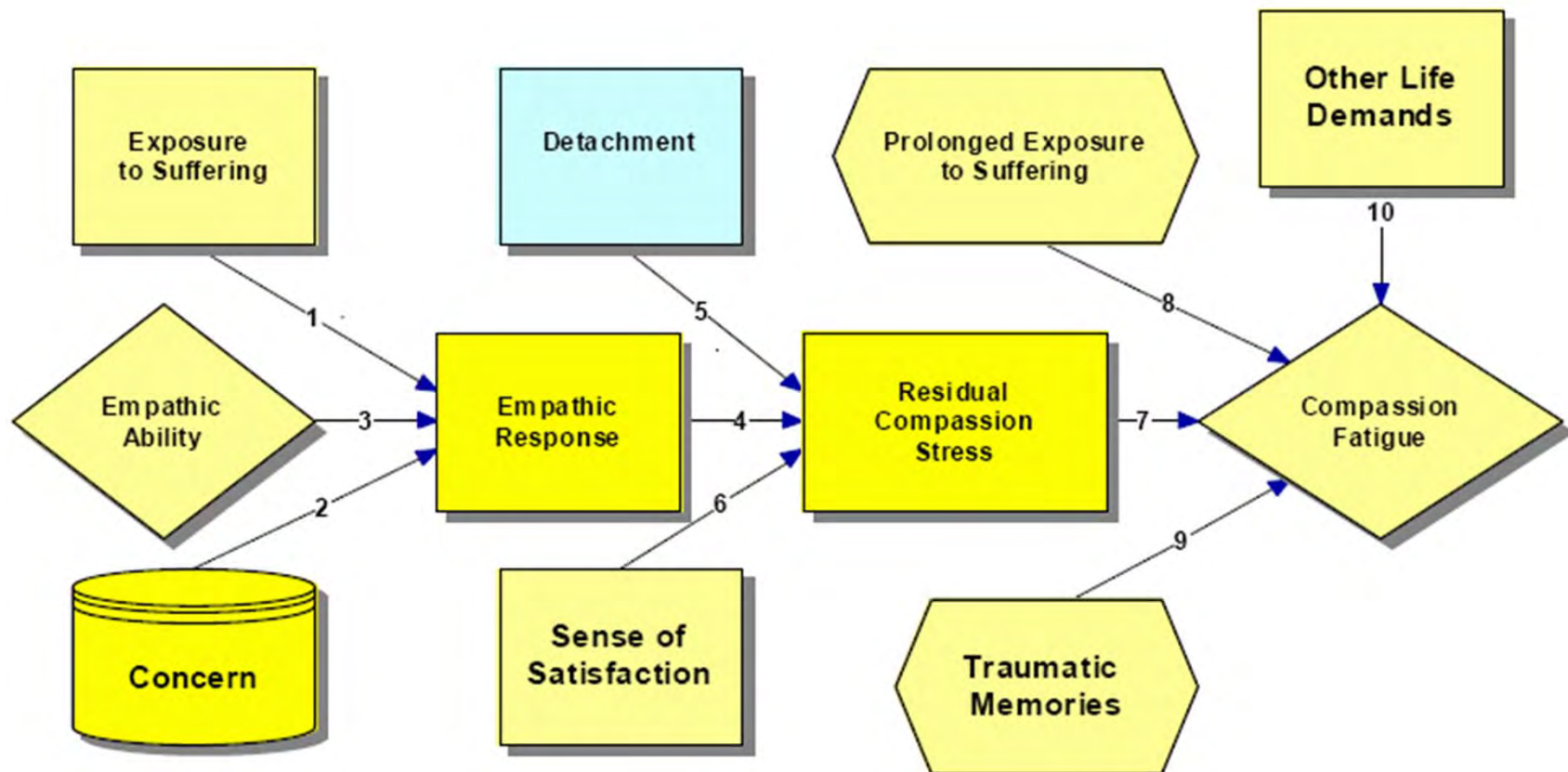
- Review definition by Figley (2005)
 - Compassion fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people in distress;
 - An extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it is traumatizing for the helper;
- (continued) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhIWddAXSRA>

CF Definition (continued)



- The helper, in contrast to the person(s) being helped, is traumatized or suffers through the helper's own efforts to empathize and be compassionate;
- Often, this leads to poor self care and extreme self sacrifice in the process of helping;
- Together, this leads to compassion fatigue and symptoms similar to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Compassion Fatigue Process



Compassion Fatigue



- One Provider's Experience
 - My own work with trauma as a psychologist
 - High School Shooting
 - Sexually Assaulted Detained Immigrants
 - Hurricane Survivors
 - Combat Trauma Survivors

What Doesn't Work



- Engage in coping strategies that will perpetuate/intensify negative symptoms down the road
 - Drinking alcohol, drugging
 - Excessive spending, gambling
 - Eating unhealthy foods
 - Isolating from others
 - Caring for everybody but yourself

What Works



- Recognize signs of compassion fatigue in yourself
 - Identify ways to mitigate symptoms and/or increase compassion satisfaction
- Recognize signs of compassion fatigue in fellow employees
 - Identify ways to respond to a colleague or subordinate dealing with compassion fatigue or grief

A New Take on an Old Adage



- *“First do no harm
to Self”*

- Gentry & Figley, 2007

- Created adage after discovering correlation between
compassion fatigue and ethical violations

Standards of Self-Care



1. Respect for dignity & worth of self
2. Responsible for self-care
3. Universal right to wellness
4. Physical rest, emotional rest & nourishment
5. Seek, find & remember appreciation from supervisors & clients
6. Make it known that you wish to be recognized for your service

More of What Works



- Build Resiliency
 - Building resiliency involves doing two difficult things, simultaneously, in a stressful situation...
 - Self Soothing
 - Self Confronting

Building Resiliency-What Works



- Self-soothing without self-confronting leads to *avoidance*
 - Avoidance may include withdrawing, being demanding, emotionally-driven, eating, substance abuse, etc.
- Self-confronting without self-soothing leads to *beating yourself up*
 - Growing may involve backing off & letting go of control of a situation

Getting Help



- Professional Help
 - Get Professional help when:
 - Your thoughts are overwhelming to the point of being frightened or distressed
 - You think of harming yourself or others
 - You get feedback from family or friends expressing concern about your wellbeing and advising you to seek help
 - You need someone to talk to about your experiences and feelings

Relation to MHS Quadruple Aim



- Readiness
 - “ready to deploy...”
and “ready to deliver...”
- Population Health
 - “...increased resilience...”
- Experience of Care
 - “...compassionate...”
- Per Capita Costs
 - “...care over time...”



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